

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 SAM-01 SAB-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 /082 W

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R 040925Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 590

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

S E C R E T CAIRO 9797

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, UR, EG

SUBJECT: PESSIMISM IN CAIRO: CONCERN THAT USG HAS FAILED IN ME

REF: CAIRO 9541 AND 9548

SUMMARY. ALTHOUGH HIGHEST ECHELONS OF GOE RETAIN FULL CONFIDENCE IN SECRETARY KISSINGER AND STEP BY STEP APPROACH TO ME PROBLEM, MANY EGYPTIANS HAVE CONCLUDED, WITH REGRET, THAT UNILATERAL USG EFFORTS HAVE COME TO AN IMPASSE. THEY CONSEQUENTLY WELCOME WHAT THEY PERCEIVE TO BE RE-ENTRY OF USSR AS ACTIVE USG "PARTNER", AND HOPE GENEVA CONFERENCE CAN PRODUCE DIPLOMATIC MOVEMENT WHICH USG HAS FAILED TO BRING ABOUT. END SUMMARY.

1. NEW YORK TIMES CORRESPONDENT HENRY TANNER'S ARTICLE (REFTELS) PREDICTING IMMINENT FAILURE OF USG'S UNILATERAL DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVE IN THE ME AS WELL AS COOLING OF USG/GOE RELATIONS, HAS CAUSED SOME STIR IN CAIRO.

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2. ARTICLE HAS BEEN WIDELY READ IN DIPLOMATIC CIRCLES AND

VARIOUS WESTERN AMBASSADORS (CANADIAN, TURK, FRG) HAVE TOLD US THAT THEIR OFFICIAL MFA CONTACTS--MAINLY AT UNDERSEC LEVEL--HAVE RECENTLY SPOKEN TO THEM ALONG SAME LINES. A VARIETY OF REASONS ARE GIVEN TO EXPLAIN THE PREVAILING MOOD, VIS. A) LACK OF PROGRESS ON FURTHER ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL; B) FAILURE TO ENACT LONG PROMISED \$250 MILLION AID; :) REPORTS THAT PROMISED NUCLEAR REACTOR FOR EGYPT IDEA MAY BE SCUTTLED; D) USG VOTE ON PALESTINE RESOLUTIONS; E) RECENT RETRACTIONS BY SENIOR USG OFFICIALS AND PUBLIC FIGURES OF SEEMINGLY FORTHCOMING STATEMENTS ABOUT THE PALESTINIANS; F) RATHER WIDESPREAD KNOWLEDGE OF STATEMENTS MADE BY SENATOR KENNEDY WHILE HERE TO EGYPTIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS AND THE PRESS THAT THERE WAS "ELEMENT OF HYSTERIA" INVOLVED WHEN USG MADE PROMISES TO EGYPT, AND "NOT ALL THE COMMITMENTS ARE NECESSARILY EXECUTABLE." PREDICTABLY SOVIETS AND EAST EUROPEANS ARE SEEKING NURTURE THESE SENTIMENTS.

3. A COROLLARY OF THE TANNER VIEW, NAMELY THAT GOE IS MAKING DELIBERATE EFFORTS TO COURT THE SOVIETS, IS ALSO BECOMING POPULAR HERE. MANY EGYPTIANS JOIN FOREIGN DIPLOMATS IN EXPRESSING TO US THEIR PLEASURE THAT THE VLADIVOSTOK COMMUNIQUE "PROVED" THAT USSR IS BACK IN THE PICTURE. THERE IS ALSO CONSIDERABLE OPTIMISM THAT GENEVA CONFERENCE WILL BE RECONVENED SOON, SINCE GENEVA IS SEEN AS THE ONLY POSSIBLE STEP FORWARD, NOW THAT USG'S STEP-BY-STEP EFFORTS HAVE ALLEGEDLY ARRIVED AT AN IMPASSE. POLITICALLY SENSITIVE OBSERVERS WILL ALSO HAVE NOTICED THAT IN HIS POLICY STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT NOVEMBER 28, PM HEGAZI PLACED HIS REMARKS ABOUT GOE/USSR RELATIONS BEFORE HIS COMMENTS ON RELATIONS WITH USG (CAIRO 9642). WHILE HEGAZI'S PHRASEOLOGY VIS-A-VIS USSR WAS NOT EXTRAORDINARILY FULSOME, HE SPOKE AT GREATER LENGTH AND MUCH MORE WARMLY ABOUT SOVIET POLICY THAN ABOUT AMERICAN POLICY. TODAY'S AHRAH'S ARTICLE ON PRESIDENT FORD'S PRESS CONFERENCE CARRIES BANNER HEADLINES GIVING BREZHNEV PRIDE OF PLACE ("POSITION OF BREZHNEV AND FORD ON ME PEACE ISSUE").

4. NEEDLESS TO SAY, WE ARE NOT HEARING THESE OPINIONS FROM HIGHEST GOE OFFICIALS, BUT THE GENERAL MOOD IN CAIRO IS DEFINITELY PESSIMISTIC. EMBASSY OFFICERS ARE CONSTANTLY TAXED WITH USG'S INABILITY TO "DELIVER ON ITS PROMISES" AND THERE IS WIDESPREAD BELIEF THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER'S DIPLOMACY HAS STALLED BADLY. CONCERNED EGYPTIANS REASON THAT SADAT CANNOT

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PROCEED WITH SINAI WITHDRAWAL UNLESS SYRIA CONCURS, THAT ASAD WILL NEVER AGREE TO MOVEMENT IN SINAI WITHOUT MOVEMENT IN GOLAN, AND CONSEQUENTLY THAT EARLY RECONVENING OF GENEVA IS THE ONLY POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE TO TOTAL DIPLOMATIC INERTIA.

5. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF EGYPTIAN MARXISTS (WHO ARE CROWING), MOST EGYPTIANS SINCERELY LAMENT WHAT THEY SEE AS USG INABILITY TO CONTINUE UNILATERAL DIPLOMACY SUCCESSFULLY. ON AREA POLICY

MATTERS, THE GENERAL VIEW IS THAT, SINCE WE UNFORTUNATELY HAVE FAILED, REINTRODUCTION OF USSR THROUGH GENEVA MACHINERY OFFERS BEST OPPORTUNITY FOR PROGRESS. HOW GENEVA CONFERENCE NOW WILL BRING ABOUT THIS PROGRESS IS NEVER SATISFACTORILY SPELLED OUT IN THE PRESS OR IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION.

6. ON THE BRIGHTER SIDE, IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT A RELIABLE AND HIGHLY KNOWLEDGEABLE AMERICAN JOURNALIST HERE TOLD US DEC 2 THAT EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS TO WHOM HE HAS SPOKEN THIS WEEK HAVE BEEN NOTABLY AT PAINS TO ASSURE HIM GOE RETAINS FULL CONFIDENCE BOTH IN SECRETARY KISSINGER PERSONALLY AND IN STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TO NEGOTIATIONS. IN OUR VIEW, HOWEVER, THIS ACCENT ON POSITIVE GOE VIEW OF USG DIPLOMACY IS MORE AND MORE CONFINED TO TOP GOE FOREIGN AFFAIRS SPECIALISTS AND IS SCARCELY EVER HEARD OUTSIDE CONFINES OF MFA AND PRESIDENCY.
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